

MINUTES
New Castle City Planning Commission
Parking Study Sub-Committee Meeting
November 18, 2014 – 4 p.m.
City of New Castle Town Hall

Members Present: Dr. Joanne Viola, Chair
Lt. Adam Brams
Heather Dunigan, WILMAPCO
Andrew Hayes
Jonathan Justice
Gail Seitz
Tom Whitehead

Members Absent: Richard Robinson, Chief, Good Will Fire Co.
Albert Vannucci
Jim Vincent

Dr. Viola called the meeting to order. Roll call followed.

Minutes – A motion was made and seconded to approve the 10/23/14 minutes as distributed. Motion approved.

Communications (from residents and committee members) – Dr. Viola gave an update on the Market Street safety issue. The City removed existing confusing signs and repainted yellow curbing on the west side of Market Street to the Harmony Street corner. The City decided that the yellow curb should be adequate as a reminder for people not to park in that area, rather than posting ‘no parking’ signage. Dr. Viola said the problem is continuing, particularly on Sundays. Anyone who notices a violation should contact City police at the non-emergency number (573-2800). Lt. Brams said police will monitor the area and warnings will be issued for the first violation and a citation for a second violation. He noted that people are hesitant to call the non-emergency number. Dr. Viola suggested that police patrol the area between 10 a.m.-noon to issue warnings. It not this committee’s intention to alienate the public, but the situation is a safety concern.

Parking Utilization Study Plan – Ms. Dunigan distributed and reviewed parking usage data analysis taken from tally sheets used during the summer vehicle count (Delaware Street mixed-use inventory). ‘Total’ data indicates parking is within the 65%-85% optimal-use range that indicates sufficient parking to meet demand, including on Saturdays. ‘Individual location’ data for Thursdays and Saturdays indicates acceptable to low-usage. Delaware Street between Second and Third Streets was well used and many other locations during Saturday peak parking was over capacity range. Some other areas were over capacity range on Thursday.

Mr. Hayes and Mr. Vincent are breaking down data by the hour to see when peak hours occur and if there is any consistency with those peak hours. Specifically, based on full occupancy of the mixed-use district to predict peak mandates on an hourly basis. Mr. Hayes identified the ‘mixed-use district’ as the 100 block to 400 block of Delaware Street and added up to 19 on East Second Street to the National Park Service (NPS) office. There was discussion about whether to include West Third Street in the district.

Dr. Viola wants to determine conflicts between residents, visitors and businesses, high volume times, and how to design the next step, if needed.

As part of their transportation study, the NPS has asked this committee to do a base line and at some point prepare a comparable study. The next study could potentially be done in about three weeks and the committee needs to think of a way to identify visitors versus residents.

Delaware Street Parking Street Inventory – Mr. Hayes reported that Mr. Vincent has completed most of the residential uses and will then add the commercial portion. Delaware Street between Second and Third Streets is always busy. Only a small portion of the areas that are over taxed are on Delaware Street with some on Third Street. Mr. Whitehead does not think there is enough parking in the heart of the City. There was discussion about the creating and use of municipal parking lots and how to get the public to utilize those parking lots. Mr. Whitehead referenced a parking area with 26 spaces adjacent to the park and behind the bank.

Betsy McNamara, West Third Street, asked who is in charge of enforcing ‘timed’ parking areas in the City and how it is enforced. Lt. Brams said tires would need to be chalked to enforce parking and they do not have the manpower to properly enforce these violations. Ms. McNamara said people know these areas are not enforced. Mr. Justice said in some municipalities businesses police customer parking areas and discipline their employees who use customer parking spaces.

Mr. Hayes said recommendations need to include a safety/lighting component. His employees are primarily women and the parking area behind his business (off Third Street) is very dark. He does not require his employees to park in that lot.

Based on this committee’s recommendations for available areas for parking, Dr. Viola said City Council is considering the municipal parking area off Third Street (behind bank and approx. 30 spaces) and issues like safety/lighting is part of a City Council resolution. This committee is gathering more data to help with the decision-making process.

Event Parking – Ms. Seitz reviewed activity to date. Part of the strategies of the Comprehensive Plan is to explore methods to provide temporary special event parking. We need to work on a type of checklist identifying information on contacts to sponsors, etc. In December “The Spirit of Christmas” will be followed by “The Dickens Christmas” and it is unknown if combining the events will draw more people. There will be no parking restrictions in place. Maps directing to existing parking areas will be utilized. In addition to annual City events, the Arsenal on the Green is going to be used for events and will generate traffic (pedestrian/vehicle). The Trustees of the New Castle Common (TNCC) recently approved a regional parking lot at Bellanca Airport that can be used for City events. The Bellanca lot will service activities at Penn Farm and the Little League park.

At the November meeting a suggestion was made to involve a member of the TNCC on this committee. Michael Alfree, President of the TNCC, addressed the group. The Trustees have

designed a system to monitor activities at Battery Park and something similar could be designed for Bellanca. The City can identify the major events to take place in 2015 and get them on the calendar. This will help with potential conflicts at Penn Farm, Bellanca and the Little League.

Meetings – The committee will not meet in December. Dr. Viola would like to establish dates and meeting times for 2015. Mr. Justice suggested trying to find a regular day to meet during the evening to allow more people to attend.

A motion was made by Mr. Justice to schedule monthly meetings on the third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Motion was seconded and approved.

Entry Permit – Dr. Viola is trying to move this topic to the City and/or Separation Day Committee. This committee may make a recommendation for entry permits.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Debbie Turner
Stenographer

(Stenographer not present at meeting; minutes prepared from recording.)